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ABSTRACT

As one means of serving their clients, Ginn and Co. made a commitment in the early 1980's to provide inservice workshops for teachers that more closely related to customer needs. The vehicle for assessing these needs and ultimately designing appropriate inservice activities is Stages of Concern about the Innovation (SoC), one of the diagnostic dimensions of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM). The CBAM was developed by researchers at the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education at the University of Texas at Austin from extensive study of the educational change process. Diagnosing teacher needs and providing relevant staff development activities is a major goal of the CBAM research. This paper provides an account of the efforts of Ginn and Co., in collaboration with the Texas R&D Center, to improve their means of facilitating teachers' use of Ginn reading programs through concerns-based inservice. The use of CBAM, and especially Stages of Concern, proved an important breakthrough to understanding the nature of teachers' needs and problems related to the use of new programs as well as ways to address these needs. (Author)

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Installing New Reading Programs: A Business Education Application of Stages of Concern to Mediate Staff Development Efforts

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As one means of serving their clients, Ginn and Co. made a commitment in the early 1980's to provide in-service workshops for teachers that more closely related to customer needs. The vehicle for assessing these needs and ultimately designing appropriate in-service activities is Stages of Concern about the Innovation (SoC), one of the diagnostic dimensions of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Hall, Wallace & Dossett, 1973). The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) was developed by researchers at the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education at the University of Texas at Austin from extensive study of the educational change process. Diagnosing teacher needs and providing relevant staff development activities is a major goal of the CBAM research (Hall & Loucks, 1978). This paper provides an account of the efforts of Ginn and Co., in collaboration with the Texas R&D Center, to improve their means of facilitating teachers' use of Ginn reading programs through concerns-based in-service. The use of CBAM, and especially Stages of Concern, proved an important breakthrough to understanding the nature of teachers' needs and problems related to the use of new programs as well as ways to address these needs.

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The Concerns-Based Adoption Model

Much of the CBAM research has investigated the innovation-adoption process and what happens to individuals as they move from non-users of an innovation to becoming involved in implementation. For purposes of this work, an innovation is defined as anything that is new to an individual. Therefore, in the case of Ginn and Co., the innovation under consideration is the Ginn Reading Program (GRP) and how teachers implement the program in their classrooms. Before describing Ginn's application of the CBAM in their work with teachers, it is important to establish the model's perspective on change.

Basic Assumptions of the CBAM

A number of basic assumptions about change have been derived from the extensive experience with eductional innovation in school and college settings. These assumptions provide the foundation of the Concerns-Bases Adoption Model and formulate the model's perspective on innovation adoption.

1. In educational institutions change is a process, not and event. Too often policymakers, administrators, and even teachers assume that change is the pivotal result of an administration decision, legislative requirement, new curricular acquisition, or procedural revision. They casually assume that a teacher will put aside an old text and immediately apply a new program with great sophistication. As reflected in CBAM, the reality is that change takes time and is achieved only in stages.
2. The individual must be the primary target of interventions designed to facilitate change in the classroom. Other approaches to change (e.g., Organizational Development) view the composite institution as the primatry unit of intervention, and place their emphasis upon improving communication and other organizational norms and behaviors. CBAM, however, emphasizes working with individual teachers and administrators in relation to their

roles in the innovation process. CBAM rests on the conviction that institutions cannot change until the individuals within them change.

3. Change is a highly personal experience. Staff developers, administrators, and other change facilitators often attend closely to the trappings and technology of the inovation and ignore the perceptions and feelings of the people experiencing the change process. In CBAM, it is assumed not only that the change process has a personal dimension to it, but that the personal dimension is often of more critical importance to the success or failure of the change effort that is the technological dimension.
4. The change process is not an undifferientiated continuum, but rather is developmental. Individuals involved in change go through stages in their perceptions and feelings about the inovation, as well as in their skill and sophistication in using the innovation.
5. Staff development can best be facillitated by the use of a client-centered diagnostic/prescriptive model. Too many in-service training activities address the needs of trainers rather than those of the trainees. To deliver relevant and supportive staff development, change facilitators need to diagnose the location of their clients in the change process and to direct their interventions toward resolution of those diagnosed needs.
6. The staff developers or other change facilitators need to work in and adaptive, yet systematic way. They need to stay in constant touch with the progress of individuals within the larger context of the total organization that is supporting the change. They must constantly be able to assess and reassess the state of the change process and be able to adapt interventions to the latest diagnostic information.

To accomplish all this, a conceptual model of the change process must provide practical reference points on a constantly changing array of events. The Stages of Concern about the Innovation dimension of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model is proposed as one framework that staff developers can use to aid in diagnosing, planning, delivering, and assessing the effects of in-service activities.

Stages of Concern About the Innovation

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model provides a structure that takes into account each of the assumptions about the innovation-adoption process. Three aspects of change form the basic frame of reference of the model: the concerns that users experience about the innovation, how the innovation is actually used, and the ways in which the innovation can be adapted to the needs and styles of particular individuals. Stages of Concern about the Innovation (Hall, George & Rutherford, 1977) focuses on the concerns of individuals about the innovation and their involvement with it.

The power of the concerns dimension lies in the assumption that the process of change is a personal experience for each individual involved in it. Everyone approaching a change, initally implementing an innovation, or developing skill in using an innovation will have certain perceptions, feelings, motivations, frustrations, and satisfactions about the innovation and the change process.

The concept of "concerns" has been developed to describe these perceptions, feelings, and motivations. Research studies have initially verified a set of stages that people appear to move through when they are involved in innovation implementation. These Stages of Concerns about Innovation provided a key diagnostic tool for determining the content and delivery of in-service activities.

The concept of concerns was first described by Frances Fuller (1969). In her research, Fuller identified a set of concerns preservice teachers expressed as they moved through their teacher education program. These concerns changed from initial concerns unrelated to

teaching to concerns about self in relation to teaching, to task concerns about teaching, to impact concerns.

As the concept of teacher concerns was being disseminated, it became apparent that the concept had similar application to individual teachers and college professors involved in implementing various educational innovations. Seven Stages of Concern about the Innovation were identified (see Figure 1). When dealing with an innovation, it appears that a person's stages of concern move through the progression from self, to taks, to impact that Fuller had described.

Figure 1

Definitions:
STAGES OF CONCERN ABOUT THE INNOVATION*

6 REFOCUSING: The focus is on exploration of more universal benefits from the innovation, including the possiblity of major changes or replacement with a more powerful alternative. Individual has definite ideas about alternatives to the proposed or existing form of the innovation.

5 COLLABORATION: The focus is on coordination and cooperation with others regarding use of innovation.

4 CONSEQUENCE: Attention focuses on impact of the innovation on students in his/her immediate sphere of influence. The focus is on relevance of the innovation for students, evaluation of student out-comes, including performance and competencies, and changes needed to increase student outcomes.

3 MANAGEMENT: Attention is focused on the processes and tasks of using the innovation and the best use of information and resources. Issues related to efficiency, organizing, managing, scheduling, and time demands are utmost.

2. PERSONAL: Individual is uncertain about the demands of the innovation, his/her inadequacy to meet those demands, and his/her role with the innovation. This includes analysis of his/her role in relations to the reward structure of the organization, decision-making and consideration of potential conflict with existing structures or personal commitment. Financial or status implications of the program for self colleagues may also be reflected.

1 INFORMATIONAL: A general awareness of the innovation and interest in learning more detail about it is indicated. The person seems to be unworried about himself/herself in relation to the innovation. She/he is interested in substantive aspects of the innovation in a selfless manner such as general characteristics, effects, and requirements for use.

0 AWARENESS: Little concern about or involvement with the innovation is indicated.

*Original concept from Hall, G.E., Wallace, R.C., Jr., & Dossett, W.A. A developmental conceptualization of the adoption process within educational institutions. Austin: Research & Development Center for Teacher Education, the University of Texas, 1973.

Measurement described in Hall, G.E., George, A.A., & Rutherford, W.L. Measuring stages of concern about the innovation: A manual for use of the SoC Questionnaire. Austin: Reasearch & Development Center for Teacher Education, The University of Texas, 1977.

Assessing Stages of Concerns

There are several alternative ways in which the staff developer can collect concerns data from the individuals involved in an ongoing innovation-adoption process. The simplest is informal conversational assessment or an informal interrview. The "interviewer" can ask leading questions, listen for clues in informal discussions, evaluate requests for input and support made by the teacher. What conversational assessment lacks in scientific rigor, it make up in ease of use and cost effectiveness. The method is unobtrusive and does not readily solicit misleading information.

More formally, an open-ended statement of concerns can be solicited by asking for a written response to the question. "When you think of (the innovation) what are you concerned about?" A manual (Newlove & Hall, 1976) is available that gives instructions for administering and scoring this simple assessment device.

The most formal and precise measure of Stages of Concerns in the SoC questionnaire (Hall, George & Rutherford, 1977). The questionnaire consists of thiryt-five items, each of which has a Likert scale (not true of me now..very true of me now) on which respondents indicate their present degree of concern about the topic described in the item. There are five items for each of the seven Stages of Concern.

The questionnaire takes about fifteen minutes to administer and can be scored either by hand, using percentile tables, or by computer. SoC data when plotted on a graph results in a concerns profile which can be interpreted by analyzing the "peaks" and "valleys" of the profile. The questionnaire is psychometrically rigorous and reliable enough to provide both meaningful research data and information for planning change strategies.

Ginn's Application of Stages of Concerns

An understanding of the concerns-Based Adoption Model and Stages of Concern has helped Ginn and Co. service personnel to revamp their inservice workshops for teachers. In the past, workshops were frequently based on the concerns of the principal and reading supervisors. Now a consistent attempt is made to assess teachers concerns using either an open-ended statment of concern or an informal interview in person or by telephone. The entire service package offered to new customers has been simplified to reflect the stages of concerns of non-users progressing to early users and finally, later in the adoption cycle, to impact-concerned users. Before using the concept of stages of Concern, initial installation in-service was often geared to impact concerns. Now, this early in-service focuses on awareness, informational and personal concerns and is followed up later in the year with attention to management concerns. Workshops targeted at impact concerns are not offered to new users but are presented only when teachers have become fully familiar with the program and are comfortable with its use. Handouts used in all of the inservice sessions are now developed to relate more closely to specific Stages of Concerns being addressed in each workshop. The company has seen their approach to in-service using the concept of Stages of Concerns result in teachers reaching a routine, stabilized use of the reading program much faster than with the approach that was used previously.

Some Specific Examples

In 1982, prior to the national release of Ginn Reading Program, a study was conducted with teachers piloting the program to monitor their concerns through the first year of implementation. It was found that when teachers received inservice based on the concept of Stages of Concern that they did not develop intense management concerns related to use of the program and at the end of one year of implemenation, management concerns were minimal and use of the program had stabilized. These data were used to assess the impact of the concerns-based approach to in-service and to plan for future implementations.

More recently, in a district where teachers were in their first year of using the Ginn Reading Program, it was determined that some teachers had management concerns while others clearly had impact concerns. Because of this situation teachers were divided into two groups. One group received a half-day on management issues, while the other was provided with a half-day targeted at impact concerns. By using this strategy, teachers were provided with inservice that dealt more directly with their needs and the actual time they spent in the in-service session was reduced and used more efficiently.

In Summary

Ginn and Co. has used Stages and Concern to redesign the implementation assistance they provide to teachers who are using the Ginn Reading Program. This approach has resulted in in-service that is more closely related to customer needs. A number of staff development implications can be derived from these experiences and can also be applied by others who assist techers with the task of program implementation.

1. Attention to concerns would begin prior to actual implementation. The early contacts with teacher relateds to a program should address their initial awareness, informational and personal concerns. When implementation begins, support should be provided to address management concerns. Interventions related to impact concerns should not become the primary focus until teachers have stabilized with their use of the program.

2. Staff development targeted at concerns provides more of the support teachers and principals need in the change process at the specific times that they need it. This approach decreases the stress and trauma related to new program implementation and thus viewed more positively by the participants.

3. The experiences of Ginn and Co. indicate that when the concerns-based approach to in-service is provided, teachers use of the program stabilized more quickly. This faster implementation is important because student outcomes cannot be expected to be as great when a program is only partially implemented or is being used by the teacher in a disjointed or mechanical way.

4. Finally, the concerns-based approach to staff development saves both time and money. Providing staff development is a costly endeavor both in terms of teachers' and service personnel's time and money to support in-service activities and release time

for teachers. Utilizing the concerns-based approach, ensures that valuable time and money will not be wasted by providing teacher with in-service activities that are inappropriate to their current needs and concerns.

In conclusion, Ginn and Co. has found Stages of Concern very helpful in meeting the in-service needs of teachers using their reading programs. And, incidently, the company has also found concerns theory to be very helpful in working with their own personnel as they have been involved in the launch of new programs and the development of a new service division.

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